

but later
when I pull into the driveway
there's the Manx cat
with his rudimentary tail and
his tongue hanging out.
he refuses to move for the car
I get out
pick him up and
throw him in the front seat.
we drive into the garage
together.

we get out
the other two cats are waiting
(lovers of fishheads, dreamers of
birds)
I open the door
and all the cats enter
with me

they run into the kitchen
I notice where Dallas and San Diego are
playing ... Danny White is at quarter for
Dallas.
I always liked Danny White,
he's a gambler

I might watch a few quarters
Sunday's a day of rest
all important things should be forgotten .

I decide to not even feed the cats
for a while
Tuesday or Wednesday I'll begin
on that childhood novel
again.

TALKING TO THE BARKEEP

"correctly so," I told him,
"I would have them
robbing banks and selling
drugs ...
I'll have another vodka-
7"

"correctly so," said the
barkeep mixing the
drink, "I'd have them
collecting garbage
or running for congress
or teaching
biology"

"or," I said, reaching for the drink, "selling flowers on the corner or giving backrubs or blowing glass"

"correctly so," said the barkeep pouring himself a drink, "I'd have them plowing the good earth or carrying mailbags"

"or," I said, "mugging old ladies or pulling teeth ..."

"or directing traffic working the factories," said the barkeep, "or jumping freights to the nearest harvest ..."

"it's a great day," I said.

"beautiful," said the barkeep, "but it's the mediocrity of the masses which creates the wealth of its entertainers and artists."

"another vodka-7," I said, "the earning of money is hardly proof of the worthiness of the product."

"if I were the audience of the world," the barkeep said, moving the drink toward me, "many a darling genius would either be starving or working a functional job."

"and correctly so," I said, raising my drink.

"it's a beautiful day," said the barkeep.

"a hell of a beautiful day," I said.